

## APPENDIX M -- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE PERMITTING AGENCY

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Two keys to developing an effective public participation program are knowing who within your agency or elsewhere can provide support on public participation activities and knowing where to obtain information. Most Regions have one person assigned as the **public involvement coordinator (PIC)**. The PIC serves as a liaison between community members and permit writers, enforcement personnel (both EPA and state), facility owners and operators, and other individuals or groups. The PIC oversees the implementation of the overall public participation program. He or she may handle logistics for public meetings, develop and maintain mailing lists, and review and/or help prepare news releases, fact sheets, and informational materials.

Other individuals who may be able to assist with public participation activities include:

**Other EPA Staff** - Other members of the EPA Regional technical, legal, public affairs, project officer, or permit writer staffs are also valuable resources. It is essential that these staff coordinate their efforts. They can provide technical assessments of the facility for release to the public or provide information relative to permitting issues and aspects of enforcement, compliance, and corrective action activities developed for the facility. Graphic designers, typesetters, and other support staff can help you with your program. In addition, CERCLA community relations coordinators in your office who have sites in the same community could take care of some of your activities, or at least provide you with valuable advice.

**State Personnel** - In authorized states, most of the public participation responsibilities listed for EPA staff will be assumed by state personnel. Regardless of authorization status, state agencies should play an active role in the development and implementation of public participation programs. For example, agencies in unauthorized states can provide information such as names for inclusion on a mailing list, background information on a facility's history, and knowledge of community attitudes toward the facility.

**Facility Staff** - While oversight of the permitting and enforcement processes is the sole responsibility of the regulatory agency, facility owners or operators are responsible for conducting a number of activities. In addition, facilities resources and staff can provide for public participation activities that go beyond the regulatory requirements.

**Public Interest Groups** - Community groups, civic organizations, environmental groups, religious and educational organizations may all provide public participation activities that supplement the requirements. The agency may consider teaming with a local public interest group to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about the permitting process or technical issues. Public interest groups may be able to provide resources or personnel to help maintain repositories or to provide informational newsletters. The agency may also consider contacting an impartial civic organization (e.g., the League of Women Voters) to mediate at public meetings or other functions.

**Contractors** - Public participation contractors who work for your agency can provide support by conducting some of the more time-consuming activities, such as community interviews or logistics for public meetings.

**If There's No One Who Can Help** - You may be the only person available to conduct public participation activities, in which case you need to estimate your level of effort carefully so that you can choose the activities that will give you and members of the public the most benefit. You need to consider your schedule as well, and plan activities so that they complement your technical schedule and leave time for appropriate public participation.

### *Additional Sources of Assistance*

**Information Resources** - Each EPA Regional office should have informational materials available to help plan public participation strategies and assist in assessing a community's needs and in implementing responsive activities. PICs should be able to guide you to specific manuals, guidance documents, and memoranda that elaborate on regulations and principles of public participation and give helpful tips on implementing successful programs. For example, the three-volume *RCRA Public Involvement Reference Catalog* (September

1990) is a repository of materials from which readers can gather ideas and information concerning the RCRA program and RCRA public participation. You may also want to research materials from other EPA programs, such as Superfund, or outside sources to gather ideas that may be useful in dealing with particular permitting situations.

**Training** - Training is generally available for staff in a variety of areas, including public participation, community relations, risk communication, and community outreach. If training specific to the RCRA program is not available, you can easily adapt community outreach activities used in other programs to your RCRA situation. The techniques and methods used for RCRA public participation programs -- such as public meetings, fact sheets, and information repositories -- are also used in other programs.

**Other Materials** - There also are ready-made resources available for you to use in your program. EPA has developed fact sheet templates for RCRA actions, storyboards that describe the permitting process, and other information materials to save you time in developing public involvement information. The Regional PIC can provide more information on these materials.